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# CIRESS

is a world where magic dominates every aspect of daily life. For centuries, seven Guilds of magic have presided over this enchanted globe, owing much to the **Eternal Spirits** of their original Guild Masters. Living on as ethereal phantoms, each Eternal Spirit provided their Guild's current Master with timeless wisdom and sorcerous knowledge.

This ancient balance of power was shattered on the day **Genevieve Villard** was to become Master of the Nouveau Guild. At Gen's Rite of Ascension, a mysterious stranger imprinted a mystical sigil on the palm of her rebellious sister, **Giselle**. When the Sigil's power drew all seven Eternal Spirits into Giselle, a turbulent new era dawned for Ciress. Granted vast magical might, Giselle Villard reluctantly became the most powerful Mystic her world has ever known!

## RECENTLY:

Giselle returned to her old "party-girl" ways following her victory over the Demon Queen, Animora. Reconnecting with her old friends, **Lorraine**, Annette and Guy, she met Lorraine's new boyfriend, **Detective Manion**. Little does Giselle suspect that Manion is actually one of the most corrupt, most dangerous cops in the Nouveau police department...

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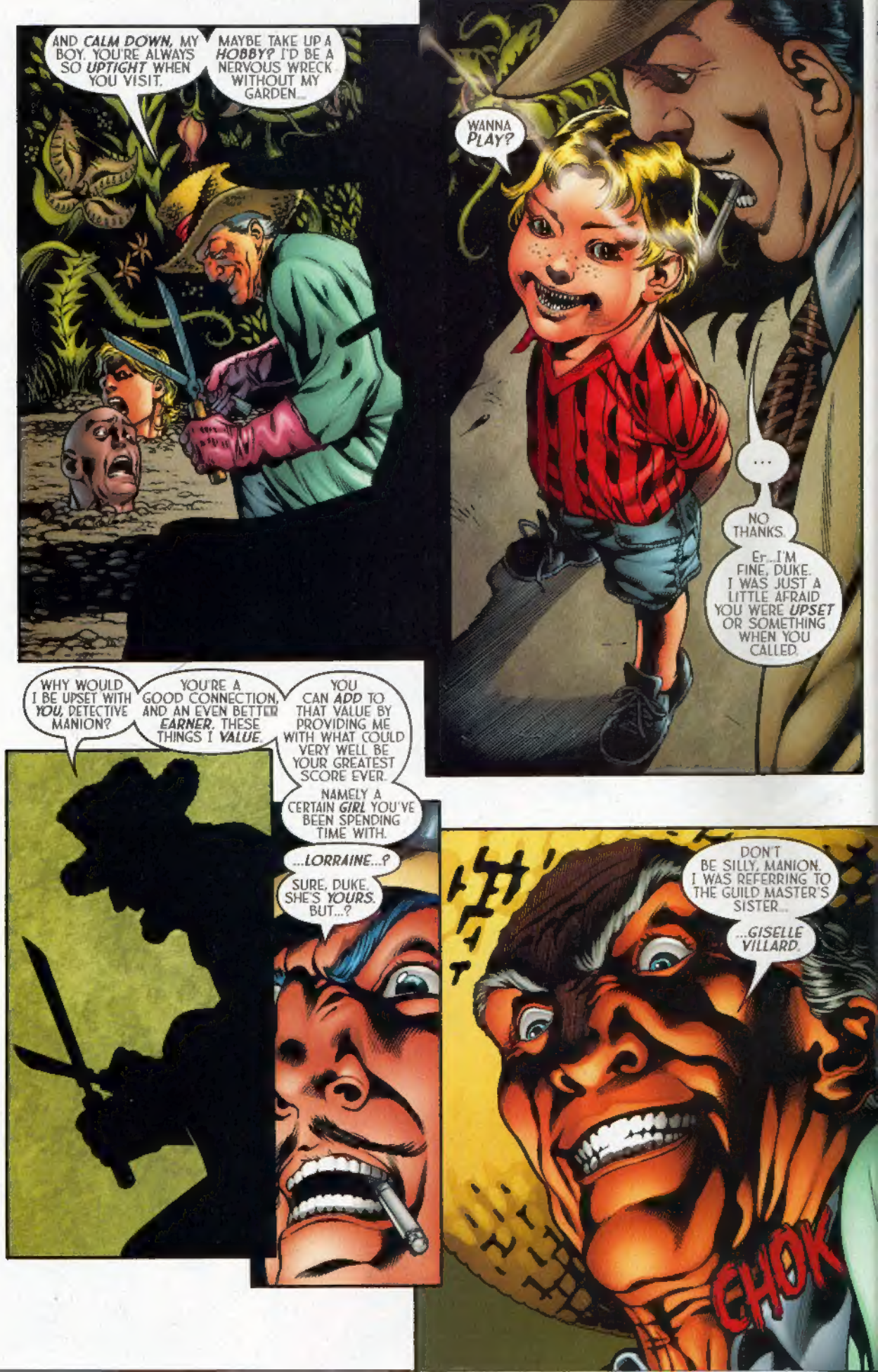
MY SISTER'S KIDS. PROMISED I'D LOOK AFTER THEM TODAY: SHE'S HAVING A FRIEND FOR LUNCH.
TRY TO IGNORE THEM. IT'S NOT THE FIRST TIME I'VE DONE BUSINESS IN FRONT OF THE FAMILY.
YOU'RE IT!


AND CALM DOWN, MY BOY. YOU'RE ALWAYS SO UPTIGHT WHEN YOU VISIT.
MAYBE TAKE UP A HOBBY? I'D BE A NERVOUS WRECK WITHOUT MY GARDEN...
WANNA PLAY?
...
NO THANKS.
Er...I'M FINE, DUKE. I WAS JUST A LITTLE AFRAID YOU WERE UPSET OR SOMETHING WHEN YOU CALLED.
WHY WOULD I BE UPSET WITH YOU, DETECTIVE MANION?
YOU'RE A GOOD CONNECTION, AND AN EVEN BETTER EARNER. THESE THINGS I VALUE.
YOU CAN ADD TO THAT VALUE BY PROVIDING ME WITH WHAT COULD VERY WELL BE YOUR GREATEST SCORE EVER.
NAMELY A CERTAIN GIRL YOU'VE BEEN SPENDING TIME WITH.
...LORRAINE...?
SURE, DUKE. SHE'S YOURS. BUT...?
DON'T BE SILLY, MANION. I WAS REFERRING TO THE GUILD MASTER'S SISTER...
...GISELLE VILLARD.
CHOK

JAZZRATS
YOU SURE SHE'S HERE? I MEAN, WE HAVEN'T SEEN HER IN A WEEK, SO WHY SHOULD SHE MAKE IT EASY FOR US NOW?
TRUST me, kid...

GOTTA HAND IT TO YOU, 'ELLE, THIS PLACE IS THE LIVING END!
JUST WHEN YOU THOUGHT YOU'D WORN OUT EVERY CLUB IN TOWN, eh?

THIERRY!
Um...HI. IT'S GOOD TO --
HEY, GIRLS! THIS IS THE GUY I WAS TELLING YOU ABOUT!

THIERRY CHEVALIER...
...MEET THE BEST PARTY-PALS A GIRL EVER HAD...
...LORRAINE, GUY AND ANNETTE!

NO WONDER YOU HID HIM FROM US, GISELLE. HE'S A DISH.
HERE, HERE.
AND SUCH AN INNOCENT SPARKLE IN HIS EYE!
WE'LL SOON FIX THAT.
...THANKS...
WOW. SO YOU'RE THE INFAMOUS "GOOD-TIME GANG"...
C'mon, kid. You can't pull HER out of the quicksand if you're in up to your OWN neck...
SORRY, I'M SO LATE, BUT THOSE CROOKS AREN'T GOING TO CATCH THEMSELVES!
MANION! WHO SAYS THERE'S NEVER A COP AROUND WHEN YOU NEED ONE?
DIDJA BRING YOUR HANDCUFFS, SWEETIE?
HAHAHAHA HAHAHA
Great. Now there's a SHARK in the quicksand...

SEVEN SPIRITS...I HAVEN'T STAYED OUT ALL NIGHT SINCE ART SCHOOL...
CONSIDER THIS *NIGHT SCHOOL*. YOU HAVE THE VERY *BEST* PROFESSORS, DARLING. CLASS MEETS AGAIN AT MIDNIGHT. TOODLES!
I'M FAMISHED.
WANNA COME UP FOR A NIBBLE?
HONESTLY... I'D RATHER *TALK*, NOW THAT WE *FINALLY* HAVE A MINUTE TO OURSELVES. I'VE BEEN, WELL...
I'M *WORRIED* ABOUT YOU, GISELLE. YOU DISAPPEAR FOR DAYS AT A TIME, AND YOU HAVE TO ADMIT YOU'VE BEEN ACTING... *DIFFERENT*.
I *CARE* ABOUT YOU. I WANT TO KNOW IF YOU'RE—
CLAUDE, PLEASE HAIL THIS *BOY* A TAXI. AND WHILE HE'S WAITING, PLEASE *EXPLAIN* TO HIM WHAT *"DOUBLE-ENTENDRE"* MEANS.

SKITTER? ARE YOU HERE? I SAW YOU HANGING AROUND LAST NIGHT, BUT I LOST TRACK OF YOU AFTER WE LEFT--

-- JAZZRAT'S...

GISELLE VILLARD? WE HAVE TO TALK--

Meep!

HOLD YER FIRE! I'M A COP!

FOR CRYIN' OUT LOUD! MY SOURCES SAID YOU *HATE* MAGIC...
WHAT ARE YOU DOING *INSIDE* MY HOME, *UN*INVITED?
TRYING TA *SAVE* YOUR SISTER'S HASH.
COME AGAIN?
YOUR FRIEND, LORRAINE. HER NEW BOYFRIEND, YVES MANION, IS A DETECTIVE ON THE NOUVEAU CITY *VICE* SQUAD.
MY NAME'S *DEVEREAUX*. I'M IN *INTERNAL AFFAIRS*. DO YOU KNOW WHAT THAT MEANS?
IT MEANS YOU INVESTIGATE...
...*OTHER* POLICE...
...Oh, POOR LORRAINE...

POOR LORRAINE, MY FOOT I BEEN TAILIN MANION FOR MONTHS YOUR SWANKY FRIENDS HELPED HIM MAKE SOME UPPER-CRUST CONNECTIONS
Uh-uh THEY'D NEVER HURT ANYONE ALL THEY DO IS HAVE FUN—
WITH A LOTTA RITZY PEOPLE WHO LIKE THE OCCASIONAL SNOOTFUL OF PIXIE DUST CUZ THEY GOT MORE MONEY THAN BRAINS
MANION'S GOT HIS FINGER IN EVERY DIRT-PIE IN TOWN. YER FRIENDS JUST HELPED HIM OPEN A NEW MARKET WITH VERY DEEP POCKETS
I DON'T KNOW IF THEY KNEW WHAT THEY WERE DOING. THEN AGAIN I DON'T CARE. I'LL WORRY ABOUT IT AFTER I MAKE THE ARRESTS
WHAT YOU NEED TO WORRY ABOUT IS HOW IT WOULD LOOK IF THE NEWS GOT OUT THAT THE GUILD MASTER'S SISTER IS SO CHUMMY WITH THE SCUM OF THE CITY. YOU WANT THAT HAPPENIN?
NO
SMART GIRL
WEAR THIS WHEN YOU GO OUT WITH THEM TONIGHT. I'LL BE LISTENING IN ON THE OTHER END
GET MANION TO TALK BUSINESS. YOU GET ME SOMETHING USEFUL, AND THE D.A. WILL KEEP YOUR NAME OFF THE RECORD WHEN IT ALL GOES TO TRIAL
AND IF I DO THIS FOR YOU, MY FRIENDS ARE OFF THE HOOK?
ALL I CAN PROMISE IS WE'LL KEEP FROM DRAGGIN THE GUILD MASTER'S NAME THROUGH THE MUD
WHATEVER HAPPENS TO YOUR PALS DEPENDS ON HOW GUILTY THEY REALLY ARE, SO YOU GOT NOTHIN' TO WORRY ABOUT, RIGHT?

I WILL NOT SIT DOWN GUY! THIS IS IMPORTANT!
EVERYBODY LISTEN! THIS SO CALLED TUNNEL OF LOVE IS DEFECTIVE!
Y KNOW IT WAS CUTE AT FIRST BUT DON'T THEY EVER GIVE IT A REST?
I AM STILL SINGLE, AN I WANT MY MONEY BACK!
HELLO ? G SE E ^
YEAH
OKAY G SELLE WHATEVER'S ON YOUR MIND IT SURE ISN'T ME HAVE A GOOD TIME I'M OUT OF HERE
CHERRY WHERE RE YOU GO ING? THE NIGHT'S ST LL YOUNG!
COME BACK! I PROMSE I L BEHAVE!

THE LEAST THAT BOY COULD'VE DONE IS DROP OFF LORRAINE ON HIS WAY BACK HOME TO MAMA
M FINE
DETECTIVE MANION
I'LL THANK YOU TO KEEP COMMENTS LIKE THAT TO YOURSELF THIERRY'S MORE OF A MAN THAN YOU KNOW
IN FACT, THERE'S A FEW *OTHER* THINGS YOU DO THAT WE SHOULD SPEAK ABOUT *PRIVATELY*, IF YOU DON'T MIND
*CAPITAL* IDEA. THERE'S ACTUALLY SOMETHING I'VE NEEDED TO ASK *YOU* ABOUT
MY, AREN'T *WE* MYSTERIOUS?
YEAH, WHAT GIVES?
YOU TWO LOOK AFTER LORRAINE FOR A MINUTE?

I KNOW ALL ABOUT YOUR DIRTY BUSINESS MANION I WANT YOU TO LEAVE MY FRIENDS OUT OF IT
FAIR ENOUGH THERE'S NOT MUCH *MORE* THEY CAN DO FOR ME, ANYWAY
OH, THEY'VE OPENED A FEW DOORS AND LORRAINE'S A SWEET DIVERSION, *BUT*
LET'S FACE IT, THIS BUNCH IS *ANYTHING* BUT DISCREET AND DISCRETION IS *KEY* IN MY LINE OF WORK
JUST AS THIS IS IN YOUR *SISTER'S* HOW POPULAR DO YOU THINK SHE'D BE IF PEOPLE FOUND OUT THE SORT OF *DEPRAVITY* THAT GOES ON RIGHT UNDER HER NOSE?
IF YOU'RE *THREATENING* GEN
I'M OFFERING YOU THE CHANCE TO *PERSONALLY* MAKE SURE ANY SCANDAL *STAYS* OUT OF THE PUBLIC EYE
THAT'S IT, GIRL, GET I'M TO SHOW YOU THE GOODS
SEE, CRIME IS LIKE A *CHRONIC DISEASE* YOU CAN NEVER HOPE TO *CURE* IT, BUT YOU *CAN* KEEP THE SYMPTOMS FROM SHOWING
YOU'VE BEEN AROUND THE BLOCK GIRL YOU *KNOW* WHAT I'M TALKING ABOUT
ALL I'M ASKING IS THAT YOU *MEET* SOME OF MY ASSOCIATES, SEE FOR YOURSELF HOW MUCH *GOOD* YOU CAN DO FOR YOUR SISTER AND FOR *YOURSELF*

SORRY, PA, BUT YOU CAN'T JUST DROP IN ON THE GUILD MASTER AT THIS HOUR OF NIGHT, EVEN IF YOU ARE HER FRIEND!
CALL THE VIZIER'S SECRETARY TOMORROW AND TRY TO SCHEDULE AN APPOINTMENT
Heh
NOW GET LOST
TOLD YOU IT WOULDN'T WORK
It was just a formality kid
Sometimes you gotta ask, likely ever' time you already know you'll have to go with Plan B
or Plan Skitter if you prefer
WH...?
I KNEW THERE WAS MORE TO YOU THAN MEETS THE EYE, BUT HOW DID YOU?
Aw NO — HER CLOTHES, SKITTER GET US OUT OF HERE FAST! IF GEN WALKS BACK IN HERE INDECENT
Too late!
AAHHH!

THIERRY?!
WHAT IN THE INFERNAL PLANES ARE YOU AND SKITTER *DOING* HERE?

IT'S *GISELLE* MORE TO THE POINT, IT'S THOSE HORRIBLE *PEOPLE* SHE HANGS OUT WITH --
HOLD ON
SIGH

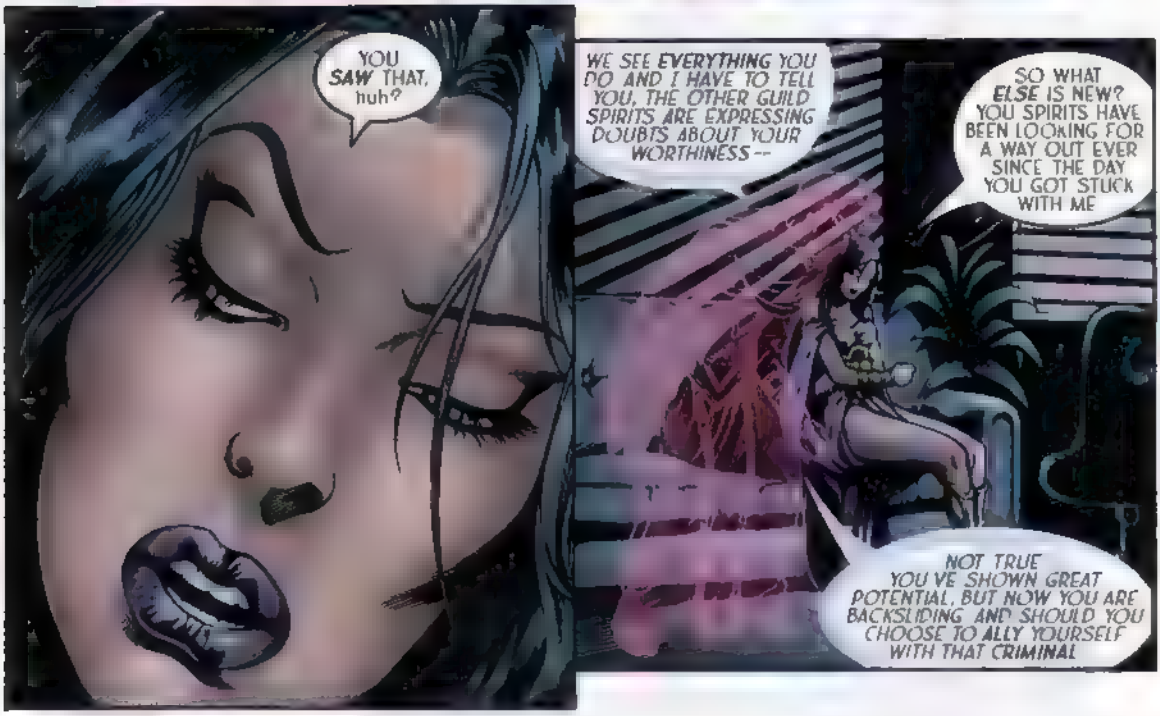
RATS. I DIDN'T MEAN TO VANISH THE *ICE CREAM*. .
SORRY IF I RATTLED YOU, GEN IT'S ABOUT YOUR SISTER. HAVE YOU NOTICED A *CHANGE* IN HER?
HOW SO?
WELL SHE'S REALLY MOODY AND SELFISH. DISAPPEARS FOR DAYS AT A TIME
STAYS OUT ALL NIGHT LONG WITH LORRAINE, GUY AND --

ANNETTE I'VE *MET* THEM
ACTUALLY, IT SOUNDS LIKE GISELLE IS BACK TO *NORMAL*

No, honey This is more serious than it looks

GISELLE?
GISELLE, WE NEED TO SPEAK
OKAY, BUT COULD YOU COME HERE FOR A CHANGE? THAT NOWHERE-PLACE YOU SPOOKS LIVE IN GIVES ME A HEADACHE

IS THAT REALLY WHY YOU WON'T COME TO THE SPIRIT PLANE?
WHAT ARE YOU GETTING AT?
YOU'RE AVOIDING US BECAUSE YOU KNOW YOU'RE BEHAVING POORLY
THE SELF-INDULGENT NIGHTS OUT, THE HAIR-TRIGGER TEMPER
YOU VERY NEARLY KILLED THAT CONSTABLE JUST FOR STARTLING YOU


YOU SAW THAT, huh?
WE SEE EVERYTHING YOU DO AND I HAVE TO TELL YOU, THE OTHER GUILD SPIRITS ARE EXPRESSING DOUBTS ABOUT YOUR WORTHINESS --
SO WHAT ELSE IS NEW? YOU SPIRITS HAVE BEEN LOOKING FOR A WAY OUT EVER SINCE THE DAY YOU GOT STUCK WITH ME
NOT TRUE YOU'VE SHOWN GREAT POTENTIAL, BUT NOW YOU ARE BACKSLIDING AND SHOULD YOU CHOOSE TO ALLY YOURSELF WITH THAT CRIMINAL

YOU DON'T EVEN KNOW WHY I AGREED TO MEET WITH HIM TONIGHT
I AM MORE CONCERNED WITH WHAT HE WANTS FROM YOU. WOULD HE PRESUME THAT YOU HAVE SOME INFLUENCE IN THE NOVAFORCE WHEN YOU ARE NOT EVEN A MEMBER?
PROBABLY NOT
DID YOU REVEAL YOUR MOST... ABHORRENT TO HIM IN ANY WAY?
IF YOU'RE ALWAYS WATCHING THEN YOU KNOW I DON'T
SOMEHOW THIS MAN OR SOMEONE HE ANSWERS TO
IT'S A TEMPTING THOUGHT TO NEVER AGAIN HEAR A WORD OF YOU YAKKING INSIDE MY MIND BUT YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE BOTHERED WITH THE ULTIMATUM
I AGREED TO MEET MANN ON MY OWN AWAY FROM MY FRIENDS SO THAT I COULD DESTROY HIM
HE'S TRYING TO USE ME AND AFTER WHAT I'VE BEEN THROUGH THE LAST FEW MONTHS THAT'S THE WORST MISTAKE ANYONE COULD MAKE

SHE'LL BE HERE. I'M SURE OF IT
SHE BETTER. I CAN'T REMEMBER WHEN THE BOSS WUZ THIS INNERESTED IN SOMEBODY
DON'TCHA THINK YOU'RE RUSHING IT THOUGH? SHOWIN HER THE OPERATION RIGHT AWAY WON'T BE TOO SHOCKING?
BELIEVE ME, SHE'S NO INNOCENT THE SOONER SHE'S IN TOO DEEP THE MORE COOPERATIVE SHE'LL BE
BOSS! I THINK YER GUEST S HERE
DETECTIVE DEVEREAUX, LISTEN CLOSELY. I AM HERE FOR MY OWN REASONS I'M NOT DOING THIS FOR YOU
YOU SEEM LIKE A GOOD MAN, SO I'M GIVING YOU THE BENEFIT OF A WARNING- DON'T GET IN MY WAY
WHAT HAPPENS NEXT IS NOT FOR YOUR EARS

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT IS ALL MINE!
WHAT IN THE...?
SORRY I'M LATE, DETECTIVE MANION.
SHHRRRRIPP
HOW'S SHE CASTIN' SPELLS WITHOUT SAYIN' 'EM OUT LOUD?!
NO WONDER THE DUKE WANTS YOU...!

KEEP HER BUSY, BOYS!
I MIGHT HAVE SOMETHING BACK HERE THAT CAN HOLD HER OFF!
EXIT
LET'S DANCE, TOOTS!
NOT BY THE HORN ON YOUR CHINNY-CHIN-CHIN.
RRAAHH!
ALL RIGHT, MANION, IT'S JUST YOU AND—

--WHAT IN THE INFERNAL PLANES ARE *THEY* DOING HERE?!

THEY *WORK* FOR ME, YOU IDIOT! THEY'VE BEEN RUNNING PIXIE DUST FOR MONTHS. *SEEING* THEM WAS SUPPOSED TO MAKE YOU FEEL MORE *AT EASE* ABOUT JOINING THE OPERATION!
BUT I GUESS YOU WERE HIDING AS BIG A SECRET FROM *US* AS WE WERE FROM *YOU!*
YVES, WHAT ARE YOU *DOING*...?

MAKING IT *HARDER* ON HIMSELF.
NO...
WHRAMM

GUYS, YOU HAVE TO GET OUT NOW. THE COPS WILL BE HERE ANY SECOND.
G-GET AWAY FROM US, SEVEN SPIRITS, GISELLE... WHAT'S HAPPENED TO YOU...?
I WAS JUST WONDERING THE SAME THING ABOUT YOU.
DEVEREAUX? YOU CAME ALONE?
I STARTED OVER HERE THE MOMENT YOU BROKE OUR CONNECTION. BACKUP OUGHTTA BE RIGHT BEHIND ME.
GOOD. THEY CAN ARREST THIS BUNCH. YOU'LL NEED AN AMBULANCE FOR MANION.
WHAT'D HE DO TO EARN THE EXTRA LUMPS?
HE THREATENED MY SISTER AND MY FRIENDS.
YOU SHOULD KEEP THAT IN MIND.